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SOCIAL INNOVATION: THE ACTOR NETWORK THEORY

Abstract:

The emerging model of social enterprise in Indonesia demonstrates a broadly shared willingness to promote innovative economies. However, there was lack of attempt to provide conceptual clarity on how the role of project organizing is transforming in various ways within the local context. Drawing on multiple case studies, this study encompasses the implement of technology through actor-network approach, which involves a mission drifting that springs from intersection of various interests from the actors.

Keywords: social enterprise, mission drifting, actor network theory

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social entrepreneurship and social enterprise have been acknowledged for an innovative way of addressing social problem through market-oriented initiatives (Huybrechts & Nicholls, 2012). This involves various actors, including the international development agencies, which concern on promoting business inclusion between the development of free market, local values, and the full potentiality of innovation (Castresana, 2013).

Some products or innovation are developed by various actors before being transferred to a social enterprise (SE). However, a project manager may have a limited responsibility for long-term resources, as they tend to focus on project performance (Lundin, Arvidsson, Brady, Ekstedt, Midler, & Sydow, 2015). Especially when the project relies on new technology, which may bring environmental turbulence (Pratono, 2016). This raises a question on how a technology-based project embeded in an environment for improving the resources of the 'bottom of the pyramid communities.

This article aims at addressing the research gap, especially on how SE adopts technology. This study reflects on the potential contributions of ANT and its practical applicability to evaluations of government's role at the social innovation setting. We illustrate the key issues through reflecting on our ongoing investigation of three case studies.

2. ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY

The concept of actor-network theory has been emerging with concern on the enrolment process of science and technology in the performing the collective action, which involves market coordination (Callon, 1998). As social cannot be interpreted as a kind of material or domain and to dispute the project of providing a social

explanation (Latour, 2005), ANT is about consciousness of the presence of organizing powers instead of the solace of humanism or mastery of technology (Munro, 2009).

Hence, the ANT application has extended from studies on technology to various field of studies, including economics (Law J. , 1992), accounting (Lukka & Vinnari, 2017), and tourism (Jørgensen, 2017). Managers need to work in a series of different logics. Sometime they take a role as entrepreneurs, in another time they prefer to be bureaucrats, Kuhnian puzzle-solvers. Sometimes they like to show tremendous charisma (Law J. , 2007). The actor-network perspective also provides managerial implications for the national R&D resource allocation strategies for constructing the ecosystem, which need coordination in the linking activities among different actors in the innovation system (Chen & Hung, 2016).

ANT points out that agency causes a change in the surrounding world, and vice versa (Lukka & Vinnari, 2017). The social innovators incorporate their own emerging stent actor-network into the existing market network and creating a new whole without aggravating established actors and entities (Lawlor & Kavanagh, 2015). The ANT pays attention on negative ones in particular since each actor is from another actor-network, and the translation is a process of negotiation between different actor-networks. Such social ordering makes the actor-network precarious because the representativeness of an actor cannot be foretold (Law J. , 1992).

The use of ANT helps to identify actor-networks and translating actors through which individual accountabilities are shaped (Florice, Bonneau, Aubry, & Sergi, 2014). For example, the first step involves the engagement of actors acted on the project objective. The second step is on-going negotiation between actors and through the walk-through meeting artifact. Third concerns on mobilization which is the establishment of formalized communication through the email (Burga & Rezania, 2017).

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The observation was taken in three communities, Katingan, Bajava, and Surabaya. The communities were located in Indonesia. Surabaya represents an urban area in East Java, while both Bajava and Katingan represent rural areas, which was located in East Nusa Tenggara and Kalimantan. The case-study approach allows research to go beyond initial mainstream conceptions (Rittenhofer, 2015). The case-study method enables the researcher to study why and how rattan industry players made an effort to carry out cross-culture collaboration to promote inclusive global value chain. The next step is coding that researcher categorised the meaning units within each of the domains into which they have been organised. This interactive proces of dialogue with the data took priority over the data but understanding was inevitably facilitated by previous understanding (Eliot & Timulak, 2015).

4. FINDINGS

Case 1: Rattan industry cluster in Katingan, Kalimantan

In Katingan, the pilot project of rattan plantation was established in the rubber plantation. In 1990s, the government established a modern workshop to provide a series of training activities for the rattan farmers, who were expected to be able to generate income from the rattan products. This involved various actors to develop the relevant technology for specific rattan from Katingan. In fact, the farmers still

struggled to make a profit due to poor efficiency, as the cost of rattan production at the observed communities was much higher than rattan from Java.

Case 2: Takakura waste processing technology

In Surabaya, the project adopted Takakura technology. The City Government of Surabaya successfully promoted a community-based waste management, through conducting an annual competition in early 2000s. The communities did not only adopt the technology to recycle their waste, but also developed a green environment and urban farming. The technology was adopted from Japan, which was based on industrial scale. To meet the behavior of local communities, the technology was developed for home-based waste system. Following the new government structure, the communities that participated at the project gained popularity from the newspapers. In 2016, the project still struggled to compete with the subsidized compost from the stated-owned company. The began experienced the deprived financial profit.

Case 3: Bajava modern farming technology

The case study of Bajava demonstrates how the local communities were encouraged to adopt a modern farming technology, which was an intensive method of housing pigs in groups for growing hogs. The small scale traditional pig farms were expected to be left and replaced with the modern one with large scale of economies. New kinds of hybridized pigs for leanness were introduced. However, the communities began to reject, as the domestic pig serves the common purposes of tradition ceremonies, especially for funerals, marriages, and other traditional parties.

5. DISCUSSION

The ANT provides a valuable approach in examining the technology implementation, which previously assuming a more linear and causal approach. This study responds to the research gap on redefining the project management in a highly complex domain to the actors with various interests. This study indicates the the shifting power relationships and vision driving is in the ongoing projects. It is advisable for the project managers to seriously consider how to better enable the targeted communities, technology inventors, and contractor delivery participants to collaborate to introduce the technology and to ensure best value outcomes (Pratono et al, 2017).

In the observed cases, the technologies have been centrally procured by the government with support from academicians, non-profit organizations, and communities. Consequently, power relationships have shifted over time from so called "top-down" implementation strategies led by the government, to increased input and choice of local communities and users (Pratono & Maharani, 2018). This implies on mission drifting from social purposes to profit-driven project. As result, ANT helps to conceptualize how the case studies were experienced and enacted by different actors, resulting in the dynamic relationships among different actors without neglecting their inter-relatedness. The dynamic policy turbulence implies on increased flexibility in the way the technology was implemented.

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